WELSH BORDER HOSPITAL MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

MINISTRY OF HEALTH
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First Annual Report

5th July, 1948, to 31st December, 1948

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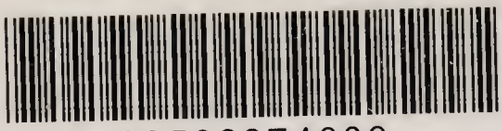

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MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE.

Chairman:

Councillor T. P. Davies, Belvedere, Llandrindod Wells, Radnor.

Vice-Chairman:

Alderman G. R. Davies, Llowes Court, Llowes, Hereford.

Members:

Councillor David Hamer, Brynderw, Newtown, Mont.

Alderman Reg. Jones, J.P., The Brades, Montgomery.

Dr. D. L. Lees, Cantre Selyff, Lion Street, Brecon.

Mrs. F. F. Corbett-Winder, Glanrhiw, Berriew, Mont.

Councillor Penry Pritchard, The Court, Boughrood, Rads.

Mrs. Stanley Francis, Eastcombe, Camden Road, Brecon.

Councillor John Jones, J.P., Voel, 12, King Street, Brynmawr.

Miss E. I. Rees, J.P., Westwood, 34, New Road, Newtown, Mont.

Alderman T. M. Wainwright, Waterloo House, Salop Road, Welshpool.

Councillor Mrs. J. O. Cunningham, J.P., 5, Alexandra Road, Brecon.

Dr. Gordon Diggle, Chancefield, Talgarth, Brecon.

Councillor James Prothero, J.P., Glannant, Llanfaredd, Builth Wells.

Mrs. D. Gibson-Watt, Doldowlod, Llandrindod Wells.

Alderman Capt. Harri Williams, J.P., Broadway House, Llandrindod.

HOUSE COMMITTEES.

Mid-Wales Hospital, Talgarth:

Alderman G. R. Davies (Chairman).
Councillor John Jones (Vice-Chairman).

Members:

Councillor T. P. Davies.
Dr. D. L. Lees.
Councillor Penry Pritchard.
Councillor Mrs. J. O. Cunningham.
Mrs. Stanley Francis.
Dr. Gordon Diggle.
Councillor James Prothero.
Mrs. D. Gibson-Watt.
Alderman Capt. Harri Williams.

Co-opted Members:

Councillor T. A. Griffiths, Portway, Bryngwyn, Painscastle, Builth.
Councillor W. V. Jones, Melrose, Crickhowell.

Brynhyfryd Hospital, Forden, Nr. Welshpool,

and

Llys Maldwyn Hospital, Caersws:

Alderman Reg. Jones (Chairman).
Alderman T. M. Wainwright (Vice-Chairman).

Members:

Councillor David Hamer.
Mrs. F. F. Corbett-Windsor.
Miss E. I. Rees.

Co-opted Members:

Councillor T. A. Clemson, Chestnut House, High Street, Welshpool.
Councillor G. E. Edwards, Brynderwen, Abermule, Mont.
Councillor Miss E. Wilson, Gorphwysfa, Caersws.
Alderman Evan Humphreys, 4, Londonderry Terrace, Machynlleth.

FINANCE COMMITTEE:

Councillor T. P. Davies (Chairman).
Alderman G. R. Davies.
Councillor David Hamer.
Councillor John Jones.
Alderman Capt. Harri Williams.

SENIOR OFFICERS OF THE AREA COMMITTEE AND INDIVIDUAL HOSPITALS.

Secretary, Finance Officer, and Supplies Officer, G. Lewis, F.H.A.

Mid-Wales Hospital, Talgarth.

MEDICAL SUPERINTENDENT:

Dr. Gordon Diggle, M.B., Ch.B., M.R.C.P. (Ed.), D.P.H.

DEPUTY MEDICAL SUPERINTENDENT:

Dr. B. J. Hand, B.A., M.B., Ch.B., B.A.O., D.P.H., D.P.M.
Dr. H. P. Anderson, L.M.S.S.A., Assistant Medical Officer.
Miss M. A. Mawer, S.R.N., S.C.M., R.M.N. Matron.
Mr. A. Fawke, Chief Male Nurse.
Mr. F. W. Williams, Engineer and Clerk of Works.
Mr. David Rees, Farm Bailiff.
Rev. W. Gurnos Davies, Chaplain.
Rev. A. W. Heathcote
Rev. J. Islwyn Davies
Rev. J. Calvin-Thomas
Rev. J. Pritchard
} Free Church Ministers.
Father W. G. Cubley, Roman Catholic Priest.

Brynhyfryd Hospital, Forden.

Mrs. E. J. Rowlands, S.R.N., Superintendent-Matron.
Mr. W. J. Rowlands, Chief Male Administrator.
Dr. R. Davies-Jones, M.R.C.S., L.R.C.P., L.M.S.S.A.
Rev. J. A. Lloyd, Chaplain.

Llys Maldwyn Hospital, Caersws.

Mrs. M. E. Humphreys, Superintendent-Matron.
Mr. I. D. Humphreys, Chief Male Administrator.
Dr. S. J. Stewart, M.B., B.Ch., B.A.O., D.P.H.
Rev. Islwyn Morgan, Free Church Minister.
Rev. W. Hopkins, Chaplain

VISITING AND CONSULTANT STAFF FOR THE GROUP.

Surgeon (Specialist):

Mr. W. McKissock, O.B.E., M.S., M.B., B.S., F.R.C.S., M.R.C.S., L.R.C.P.

General Surgery:

Dr. D. Kyle, M.A., M.B., Ch.B., L.M.S.S.A., Brecon.

Dr. E. Owen-Lloyd, F.R.C.S. (Ed.), M.R.C.S., L.R.C.P., Aberystwyth.

Anæsthetics:

Mrs. C. P. Elgood, M.B., B.S., M.R.C.S., L.R.C.P., Newport.

General Medicine:

Dr. T. J. Evans, M.D., M.B., B.S., M.R.C.S., L.R.C.P:, Swansea.

Dentists:

L. Foster-Fairey, Brecon.

W. W. Sawers, Newtown.

FIRST ANNUAL REPORT
OF THE
WELSH BORDER HOSPITAL MANAGEMENT
COMMITTEE
FOR THE PERIOD
5th July, 1948, to 31st December, 1948.

The Management Committee has pleasure in presenting the first Annual Report since the taking over of the Hospital services by the Minister of Health on the 5th July, 1948.

The Management Committee held its inaugural meeting on the 31st May, 1948, at which Dr. Trevor Jones and Dr. Linford Rees of the Welsh Regional Hospital Board attended.

Committees.

The Management Committee consists of sixteen members. The Welsh Regional Hospital Board appointed Councillor T. P. Davies, Llandrindod Wells, to be Chairman. Councillor Davies is also a member of the Welsh Regional Hospital Board and has served on the Radnorshire County Council for many years.

The majority of the members of the Management Committee were members of the late Visiting Committee of the Mid-Wales Counties Mental Hospital, including its Chairman, Alderman G. R. Davies, who was elected Vice-Chairman of the Management Committee. The Members represent the three Counties of Breconshire, Montgomeryshire and Radnorshire, and were nominated by the County Councils and other representative bodies.

Meetings of the Management Committee are held quarterly.

Hospitals in the Group.

The Group consists of the following three hospitals:—

Mid-Wales Hospital, Talgarth Brecon ...	403 beds
Brynhyfryd Hospital, Forden, Nr. Welshpool, Mont.	237 beds
Llys Maldwyn Hospital, Caersws, Mont. ...	248 beds

The three Hospitals are primarily intended to accommodate patients suffering from mental illness but there are of necessity a small number of chronic sick and non-sick cases accommodated in the latter two Hospitals, and these arrangements will probably prevail for some time until other accommodation can be acquired for them.

The normal area for the reception of patients into the Mid-Wales Hospital, Talgarth, will be the three Counties which it previously served, namely Breconshire, Montgomeryshire and Radnorshire, but where there are special circumstances patients can be received from outside this area.

House Committees.

The Management Committee appointed a House Committee for each of the three Hospitals in the Group. A small number of persons who, prior to the 5th July, 1948, had taken a keen interest in the management of particular Hospitals, were appointed to the House Committees as co-opted members.

Monthly Meetings of House Committees have been held at each Hospital.

Administration.

The administrative offices of the Group have been set up at the Mid-Wales Hospital, Talgarth, and Mr. Gwyn Lewis was appointed as Secretary and Finance Officer.

The arrangements made by the Welsh Regional Hospital Board with the Montgomeryshire County Council to act as Agents in respect of the two Montgomeryshire Hospitals during the transitional period, terminated on the 1st November, 1948. All the financial work is now carried out at the Administrative offices.

Out-Patients Clinics.

Since the 5th July, 1948, an Out-Patient Clinic has been established in each of the three Counties; these are situated at Brecon, Llandrindod Wells and Newtown. The Clinics are held weekly and are attended by Dr. Gordon Diggle and Dr. Brian Hand, who are both Psychiatric Medical Officers of the Mid-Wales Hospital, Talgarth. This is a most valuable service in an area where long distances have to be travelled and enables patients to be seen more frequently than would otherwise be possible.

Psychiatric Social Work.

For many years a part-time Psychiatric Social Worker had been employed by the Visiting Committee but unfortunately these services were interrupted owing to the resignation of the employee.

The Management Committee, however, have now entered into a scheme on a joint basis with the County Councils of Breconshire, Montgomeryshire and Radnorshire to employ a full-time social Worker. Her duties will mainly be in connection

with the Mid-Wales Hospital, Talgarth, but she will also carry out social investigations for the three County Medical Officers of Health as well as enquiries for the two Mental Deficiency Hospitals in Montgomeryshire.

Preliminary Training School for Nurses.

In order to meet the requirements of the General Nursing Council, the Management Committee have established a full-time training school for nurses which will be based at the Mid-Wales Hospital, Talgarth. After the 1st January, 1950, all nursing recruits who desire to qualify as nurses will be required to attend the full-time preliminary training school for a period of eight weeks before they enter the wards. After the preliminary training they will work full-time on the wards and receive tutoring for a period of three years.

Building Works.

The Management Committee some time ago submitted proposals to the Ministry of Health to build four houses on the Hospital Estate for the accommodation of staff at the Mid-Wales Hospital. It is anticipated that these houses will be built during the summer of 1950. Proposals have also been submitted for the building of a further eight houses as soon as possible

It is anticipated that considerable structural alterations and possibly new buildings will be required at Brynhyfryd Hospital and in particular accommodation for nursing and domestic staff. In addition, extensive repairs and redecoration is required, and this work will be put in hand as soon as possible.

Farm and Gardens.

(a) **Mid-Wales Hospital, Talgarth.** There is, attached to the Hospital, a Farm consisting of 283 acres. The Hospital is practically self-supporting in dairy and garden produce, being supplied with all the milk and root and fresh vegetables required. The herd of Shorthorn Dairy Cattle is registered as an attested herd.

(b) **Brynhyfryd and Llys Maldwyn Hospitals.** The land attached to these Hospitals is in each case small and it has been decided to discontinue farming operations for the present. Both these Hospitals have large gardens and these provide a very useful addition of vegetables.

Official Visits.

The following official visits were made during the year and Reports were submitted to the Management Committee thereon:

(a) **Mid-Wales Hospital.**

Dr. R. G. Anderson, Commissioner of the Board of Control on the 3rd November, 1948.

(b) **Llys Maldwyn Hospital.**

Dr. R. G. Anderson, Commissioner of the Board of Control on the 23rd June, 1948.
Miss M. G. Milne-Redhead, Inspector of the Board of Control on the 30th November, 1948.

Occupational Therapy.

Occupational Therapy is carried out on an extensive scale at the Mid-Wales Hospital and it is hoped to extend this form of occupation, particularly rugmaking, at the other Hospitals as soon as possible. In this respect the Management Committee have already agreed to appoint a qualified Occupational Therapist on joint basis as a beginning.

Nursing Staff.

During the last year there have been more applicants for nursing posts at the Mid-Wales Hospital, but there are still a considerable number required. The continued employment of married women (many of whom are ex-nurses) is considerable and it is essential to maintain the complement of staff at a high level so as to allow for married nurses leaving.

The position at Brynhyfryd and Llys Maldwyn Hospitals is very unsatisfactory. Continual advertisements in the local newspapers and Nursing Journals have so far provided very few applicants.

In conclusion, the Committee express their appreciation and thanks to the Officers and Staff of the three Hospitals for the way in which they carried out their difficult duties during the year.

Signed on behalf of the Management Committee at a Meeting held on the 5th October, 1949.

T. P. DAVIES, Chairman.

The Mid-Wales Hospital,
Talgarth,
Brecon.
8th March, 1949.

Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen,—

I have the honour to present the Medical Superintendent's Report for the year ending 31st December, 1948.

The year has seen many changes, the most important of which was the transfer of the hospital to the Welsh Regional Hospital Board on 5th July, 1948. The transfer was accomplished smoothly but the change is a fundamental one, the effects of which will only gradually appear. This hospital is the centre of the Group for administrative purposes, a fact which has increased its importance in the psychiatric services of Mid-Wales.

Another event of major importance was the retiral of Dr. Drummond from the position of Medical Superintendent. Dr. Drummond had been on the staff 35 years, for 25 of which he was Medical Superintendent. During the period 1940/1948 he was in addition Officer Commanding the Military Hospital which was established here. The hospital owes a debt of gratitude to Dr. Drummond's able administration over the many years he was Superintendent. I personally owe him a large debt of gratitude for receiving such a smooth running, efficient and up-to-date hospital.

The Military Hospital closed during the year and all civil patients returned from the Receiving Hospitals to which they were evacuated during the war.

This hospital now receives practically all psychiatric cases from the counties of Brecon, Radnor and Montgomery. Patients from other areas are admitted if there is any particular reason why the patient should be admitted here. This is of considerable benefit to a few patients who can thus be admitted to the hospital most convenient without regard to chargeability.

Statistics:—

		M.	F.	T.
No. resident on 31.12.47	...	172	155	327
No. admitted during 1948	...	47	55	102
No. transferred from Receiving Hosps.	...	—	61	61
No. discharged during 1948	...	29	38	67
No. who died during 1948	...	9	3	12
No. resident on 31.12.48	...	181	230	411

Of the 102 admissions, 43 were Voluntary, 2 Temporary and 57 Certified. The low percentage of Voluntary admissions is partially explained by the fact that owing to shortage of accommodation while the Military Hospital was functioning, a a deliberate effort was made to avoid admitting cases if possible.

Diagnosis on Admission:

Manic Depressive Psychosis: Depression	...	19
Mania	...	8
Involutional Melancholia	...	6
Schizophrenia	...	26
Paranoid States	...	11
Epilepsy with Psychosis	...	1
Congenital Mental Deficiency with Epilepsy	...	3
Congenital Mental Deficiency without Epilepsy	...	2
Cerebral Arterio-sclerosis	...	5
Senile Dementia	...	12
Miscellaneous	...	9
		102

Deaths:

There is little to comment on in the 12 deaths. The death rate is below the average for Mental Hospitals in England and Wales. Owing to the high proportion of elderly cases in the hospital, a rise in the death rate in the next few years appears inevitable.

An inquest was held on one of our patients who died in the Royal Gwent Hospital, Newport. A verdict of "Natural Causes" was returned.

Discharges:

Of the 67 discharges, 38 were discharged "Recovered", 23 as "Relieved" and 6 "Not Improved." I would like to observe that the distinction between "Recovered" and "Relieved" is often a measure of the optimism of the Superintendent rather than of any real statistical significance.

Staff Changes:

I succeeded Dr. Drummond as Medical Superintendent on 13th August, 1948, while Dr. B. J. Hand succeeded Dr. C. H. Bentley, who had taken a position in Canada, as Deputy Medical Superintendent. Dr. H. P. Anderson is Assistant Medical Officer.

I regret to report the death of the Rev. Llewellyn Davies who had been Methodist Minister to this hospital for many years. His successor has not yet been appointed.

Miss Eleanor Lewis has been appointed Deputy Matron.

Nursing Staff:

The number of female nursing staff is still below establishment and gives rise to some anxiety. Owing to travelling difficulties in this district it has not been possible to adopt the "Gloucestershire Scheme" of part-time nurses. The matter has been carefully considered by myself and Dr. Drummond and it is felt that the hospital would lose badly rather than gain if the scheme were adopted. Several ex-members of the staff, who left to get married, have returned to the service and have prevented a complete breakdown. These nurses, naturally, have other commitments which have prior claim and are, therefore not quite so reliable as the single staff, but the hospital is extremely thankful for their services. Every effort has been made to relieve the female nurses of non-nursing duties by the employment of Porters and German Ward Maids.

The position as regards Male Nursing Staff is more satisfactory and we have had no difficulty in obtaining suitable candidates for the few vacancies that have occurred.

Regular lectures have been given to all Student Nurses by the Medical and Nursing Staff. At present our students are sitting two sets of examinations, the old Royal Medico-Psychological Association examination and the General Nursing Council examination. Under the new General Nursing Council regulations the R.M.P.A. examinations will cease in 1951 and all students will have to sit the G.N.C. examinations. I am by no means convinced that the change will be beneficial to the Mental Hospital Service as the Preliminary Examination of the General Nursing Council is heavily biased in favour of the General Hospital student nurse, and instead of raising the standard of the Mental Hospital nurses as a whole, may easily lead to the employment of large numbers of Assistant Nurses.

Accommodation for nurses, both male and female, at the hospital is not up to modern standards. The only accommodation is off either wards or ward corridors. In view of this, permission to live out has been given whenever requested, subject to the condition that if the nurse is under 21 years of age the parent's consent must be obtained. I realise this policy means that at night the number of nurses available is small in the event of emergency, but I feel it is the lesser of two evils as the ability to live out does help recruiting.

Accommodation of Patients:

The hospital is very fortunate in that there is no severe degree of over-crowding and that in spite of nursing difficulties all wards are in use. During the next few years a considerable amount of new ward furniture will be required as the present furniture is old and showing signs of severe wear and tear. Arrangements are being made to commence redecoration of the wards in 1949.

Owing to the shortage of nursing staff on the female side, classification of patients is not too satisfactory, particularly in the admission and disturbed wards. The design of the wards is such, however, that the necessary improvements can be made without any difficulty as soon as staff is available. On the male side, with its smaller number of wards, classification is not so easy, again particularly in the admission ward. Unless an admission block can be built, this cannot easily be rectified.

Insulated food containers have been provided for all wards, with considerable improvement in the serving of meals. Supplies of crockery are fair. Plastic "crockery" has been tried in the disturbed wards and has proved very successful and its use will gradually be extended.

The supply of clothing is fair but, particularly in the male division, clothing has had to be used beyond its fair period of service. The supply is improving.

Treatment:

All modern forms of treatment, with the exception of Deep Insulin Shock, are available as and when indicated. Electric Convulsion Therapy, Electro-Narcosis, Prolonged Narcosis, Malarial Therapy, etc., are all available. The operation of Prefrontal Leucotomy has not been carried out this year on any patient, none being considered suitable, but arrangements can be made for its performance on any patient considered suitable. I agree with those who reserve the operation for such patients as are completely mentally disabled, and who may be regarded as incurable otherwise. If confined to such cases the number of operations in any one year will always be small in a hospital of this size. The results of the operation are too unpredictable for it to be used as a routine treatment.

Electro-Narcosis has only been recently commenced and it is too soon to express any opinion as to its value.

Electric Convulsion Therapy remains the main method of treatment and has maintained its reputation as being one of the greatest advances in treatment.

Malarial Therapy has not been used during the year, no cases of General Paralysis having been admitted.

Deep Insulin Shock Therapy has not been used. Owing to the shortage of nursing staff, particularly at night, I consider the risk to be too high.

Occupational Therapy is intensively used, a due balance being kept between utility and other work. The hospital has no qualified Occupational Therapist but Mr. D. Reardon, who took a course of training before the qualification existed, is in charge and is to be complimented on his work.

The X-Ray apparatus has been overhauled and made shock-proof. Although of low power and old fashioned, the apparatus serves our needs and under present conditions I do not think a large expenditure on a more modern unit would be justified. The present alterations could be incorporated in a new apparatus should it at any time be installed.

Laboratory work is carried out in Cardiff by the University of Wales. Although not as convenient as having a laboratory on the spot, the arrangement works well and is economical.

Social Welfare Work:

This has been carried out during 1948 by the National Association for Mental Health and has worked well. Unfortunately the arrangement is coming to an end and new arrangements will have to be made.

Recreations:

During the winter, weekly cinema shows and dances are held, while several enjoyable concerts by various Choirs have been given. The Summer Sports, held just before Dr. Drummond retired, were very successful, while a large party were taken to Borth-y-Guest during the summer.

The Hospital Cricket Club has been revived and has provided much interest for the patients. It has not been possible to organise a football team owing to lack of a ground, but the Talgarth Football Club very kindly allow our patients to attend their matches.

Farm and Estates:

These are the subject of special reports to you and are not dealt with further here. As usual, excellent work has been done by Mr. Rees and Mr. Hepton and their staff.

Extra-Mural Activities:

Out-Patient Clinics have been commenced at Brecon, and Llandrindod Wells. They had only been functioning a few weeks by the end of the year, so no statistics can be presented. It is hoped to start a clinic in Newtown, Montgomeryshire, in the near future.

Although owing to the low density of population the number of patients attending is small. I feel that these Clinics meet a real need and enable numerous minor cases of mental illness to be dealt with. In addition, they have a major effect in breaking down the isolation of the Mental Hospital from the general medical services of the community and help to destroy the deeply ingrained prejudice against the Mental Hospitals.

Out-Patient treatment by Electric Convulsion Therapy, etc., is arranged at the Mental Hospital in suitable cases.

In addition to the regular Clinics, visits have been paid to Ty Mawr Approved School, and domiciliary visits under the National Health Act have been carried out.

In so far as the staff of this hospital are responsible, an attempt is being made to provide Mid-Wales with a psychiatric service similar to that previously provided in more densely populated areas. It is, of course, expensive in time and travelling, but I think the results make the effort worth while.

Finally I would like to thank all the members of the staff for their loyal co-operation and help in the difficult task of taking over the administration of a Mental Hospital.

I would like also to thank Captain Francis of the Ministry of Labour, Brecon, for his willing help both as regards staff and patients. In particular, I am very grateful for his help with our non-British patients.

I have the honour to remain,

Your obedient Servant,

(Signed) GORDON DIGGLE,

Medical Superintendent.

BRECON:

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THE BULWARK.

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